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## Synopses of Important Articles.

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DR. BRIGGS' HIGHER CRITICISM OF THE HEXATEUCH. By PROFESSOR WILLIAM HENRY GREEN, D.D., in *The Presbyterian and Reformed Review* for October, 1893.

This is a review in the form of an article of the book mentioned. Is the higher criticism, as Dr. Briggs expounds it, evangelical or rationalistic, biblical or anti-biblical? The claim is absurd that the historical credibility is strengthened by the theory of four narratives, separated by centuries, and distinguished from each other by discrepancies and contradictions. The theory of Dr. Briggs does not simply find minor discrepancies and inaccuracies; it discredits very largely everything assigned to Moses. Dr. Briggs, in treating the testimony of Scripture, minimizes or evades statements however positive and explicit; in presenting objections he exaggerates and dogmatizes to a great extent.

The Book of the Covenant (Ex. 20-23) is the code committed to writing by Moses, not a modification containing the "substance." The proposition that this book is composed in decalogue and pentades is conjecture, and that the verses which may not thus be classified are fragments is pure speculation. One who is willing to accept plain historical statements is not compelled to assign the Little Book of the Covenant (Ex. 34) to a Northern writer centuries after Moses, when its origin in connection with the renewal of the covenant is made so plain.

The difference in rhetorical form between the Deuteronomic Code and the Covenant Codes is not an evidence of a new and late writer. It is just what would be expected in a farewell address under all the circumstances. The statement that Moses wrote certain things need carry with it no implication that he wrote nothing beside, as is clearly seen from the cases of Isaiah and Jeremiah. There is no proof that the book of the law found in the reign of Josiah did not contain besides Deuteronomy also the rest of the Pentateuch.

The objections to the Mosaic authorship are based on arguments drawn from language, style, and parallel narratives. The argument from language is misleading. Certain portions having been assigned a given writer, the vocabulary found in those portions is said to be characteristic of him. The argument from style is subjective and precarious. The documentary hypothesis, as originally proposed, in its application to Genesis contained nothing opposed to its inspiration and divine authority. But when the hypothesis is extended to the entire Pentateuch and the narratives are declared to be repeated accounts, widely differing, of the same events, when it is asserted

that the editor has made serious mistakes in representing as different what was really one thing, the result is to show as entirely untrustworthy the whole history. With two accounts of creation, two of the deluge, two versions of the ten commandments, three stories of the peril of the wives of the patriarchs, etc., etc., where is historical truth to be found in the Pentateuch?

The new arrangement of the codes is based upon the fallacy that the Priest Code is a development of the Deuteronomic. The fact is that these codes are supplementary parts of one system. One concerns itself with the ritual and is for the priests; the other was for the guidance of the people in the practical affairs of life. These codes were developments from the Covenant Code, one in one direction, and the other in another. The Covenant Code was a preliminary body of laws to govern the judges in their decisions, and to it the people promised obedience. It was rudimental. After the ratification of the Covenant, there followed (1) the enactment of the Priest Code in which the ritual was developed into an elaborate ceremonial; and (2) when the people reach the borders of Canaan, the Deuteronomic Code which contains everything needed by the people for their practical life.

Dr. Briggs is honestly aiming to defend the Word of God. Having accepted the conclusions of the critics, he would adjust the belief of the church accordingly. Nothing is lost by this, everything gained. But these conclusions destroy all faith in the Bible, which is the charter of the Christian faith. The theory which reduces the real Mosaic legislation to (1) the kernel of the Ten Commandments, (2) the original form of the Book of the Covenant, which later developed into the Deuteronomic Code and the ceremonial law,—this theory, when contrasted with the representations made in the Bible itself, answers the question whether Dr. Briggs's criticism is biblical or anti-biblical.

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This is, indeed, the battle of the giants. The discussion shows how impossible it is to make statements on either side in which flaws cannot be found. Dr. Green presents more clearly here than it has ever yet been presented a theory for explaining the rise of all three codes before the death of Moses. He acknowledges the existence of the codes. The question is easily put: Is the Mosaic system as we have it the work of forty years, or of ten centuries? Literalism demands the former; liberalism the latter. Notwithstanding all that Dr. Green has said, two things may safely be maintained touching the acceptance of the latter hypothesis; (1) *it does not rule out the divine factor*, and (2) it does not require the acceptance of any principles of interpretation or of any critical methods for which there may not be found abundant analogies in the Scriptures themselves outside of the Pentateuch.

W. R. H.

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ST. PAUL'S CONCEPTION OF CHRISTIANITY. X. ADOPTION. By PROFESSOR A. B. BRUCE, D.D., in *The Expositor* for October, 1893. Pp. 266-282.

The idea of adoption does not occupy a place of importance coördinate with that of justification. It denotes rather a phase of the *blessedness of the*

*justified.* The "adoption of sons" is to Paul a blessed privilege and a great source of joy. In this view he is in harmony with Christ's doctrine of sonship. But in their fundamental conceptions of the relation there is a real difference, though perhaps an essential harmony. Christ always speaks of God as Father, and men, even though wicked and prodigal, as sons: while Paul represents God as becoming Father by an act of adoption graciously exercised towards men who had previously occupied a lower position than that of sons. Paul's distinction is between slaves and sons. Those who through the mission of Christ attain to the position of sons had been sons all along, only differing nothing from slaves because of their subjection to legalism. They had been slaves under the law; they are sons under the gospel.

What, then, according to Paul, are the privileges of the filial state? He suggests at least three: (1) freedom from the law; (2) endowment with the spirit of sonship; (3) a right to the future inheritance, heirship.

1. Freedom from the law. Paul had in view the whole Mosaic law, and he emphatically asserts that, without exception, for the believer it is abolished. Some parts of the law may remain true forever; some precepts may commend themselves to the human conscience as just, good, and holy; but those precepts will come to the believer in a new form, not graven on tables of stone but on the heart; they will not be kept by restraint, but freely; fear of threatened penalties will not force their observance, but the spirit of love which rules the heart will prompt it and gladly yield it. Law as law is gone. Holding this view of the Mosaic law, he very readily asserts that the Christian is also free from the commandments of men.

2. The spirit of sonship. This naturally springs out of the state of adoption. Paul describes it first, generically, as the spirit of God's own Son, *i. e.*, of Jesus Christ. But he does not mean by this that this spirit is a spirit sent by God and owned by Christ. He thinks of the spirit in the believer as a spirit whose characteristic cry is *Father*; and when he calls that spirit *Christ's*, he does not mean that he is Christ's property, but that he is Christ's own spiritual self. Again, the spirit of sonship is represented by its attributes. It is a spirit of *trust*, in contrast with the spirit of fear characteristic of legalism. It is a spirit of *love*. *Liberty* is also emphasized as an attribute; liberty from the bondage of religious fears; liberty from the customs and traditions of men; liberty from an apprehension concerning the future; liberty even from the law of God, as a new external commandment. Here is ample liberty; nor is there danger of its abuse, for this spirit of Christ, the spirit of sonship, is a holy spirit as well as a free spirit, and he will lead Christians to assert their liberty only for holy ends. From this view of the freedom of sonship, it is easy for the apostle to proceed to the idea of universal brotherhood, and to speak of the new society based on the Christian faith as one wherein is neither Jew nor Greek, neither bond nor free, neither male nor female, but all are one in Jesus Christ.

3. Heirship. What is the inheritance? When do the sons enter on it? Obviously here and now, Christians enter on their inheritance when they begin truly to live; and that inheritance consists in *autonomy*, spiritual freedom; in *spiritual mindedness*, which is life and peace; in *spiritual buoyancy*, victorious over all the ills of life, fearing nothing, rejoicing even in tribulation because of the healthful discipline and confirmation of character which it brings. But they inherit only in part. There is suffering, and consequently much depression; there is wrong within, defective spiritual vitality; there is wrong without, and consequent oppression. Realizing these facts, Paul looks forward to the final stage in the adoption, viz., "the redemption of the body," wherein sonship shall be raised to its highest power, its very ideal realized in fellowship with Christ in filial glory.

A. T. W.